REMARKS

The Office Action dated November 30, 2004, has been received and carefully noted. The amendments made herein and the following remarks are submitted as a full and complete response thereto.

Claim 17 has been amended. Applicants submit that the amendments made herein are fully supported in the specification and the drawings as originally filed, and therefore no new matter has been added. Accordingly, claims 1-20 are pending in the present application and are respectfully submitted for consideration.

Allowable Subject Matter

As a preliminary matter, Applicants appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 2 and 8 of the present application.

35 U.S.C. § 101

Claims 17-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. Applicants appreciate the Examiner's suggestion of amending the preamble of claim 17 to recite --A pattern identification program stored on a computer-readable medium for identifying a predetermined pattern contained in an image--. Claim 17 has been amended as recommended, and therefore Applicants submit that claims 17-20 are in compliance with US patent practice. Withdrawal of the rejection is resquested.

Claim 1, 3-7 and 9-20 Recite Patentable Subject Matter

Claims 1, 3-7 and 9-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Kamimura (U.S. Patent No. 6,678,427, "Kamimura"). Applicants

respectfully traverse the rejection and submit that each of these claims recites subject matter that is neither disclosed nor suggested by the cited prior art.

Claim 1 recites a pattern identification apparatus comprising, among other features, a first collation section for making comparison and collation between data related to an image in a first area greater than an area of said predetermined pattern in said image and said data related to said predetermined pattern.

Claim 7 recites a pattern identification apparatus comprising, among other features, a first collation section for making comparison and collation between data related to an image in said first area and said data related to said predetermined pattern.

Claim 13 recites a pattern identification method comprising, among other features, a second step for making comparison and collation between data related to said image in a first area greater than an area of said predetermined pattern in said image and said data related to said predetermined pattern.

Claim 17 recites a pattern identification program stored on a computer-readable medium comprising, among other features, a second step for making comparison and collation between data related to said image in a first area greater than an area of said predetermined pattern in said image and said data related to said predetermined pattern.

It is respectfully submitted that the prior art fails to disclose or suggest at least the above-mentioned features of the Applicants' invention.

The Office Action characterized Kamimura as allegedly disclosing "a first collation section for making comparison and collation between data related to an image, i.e., unregistered constituent element, such as characters and/or lines (i.e., ruled lines), in a first area, i.e., the inputted slip where the unregistered constituent element exists, greater than an area, i.e., the inputted slip where the unregistered constituent element exists, in said image and said data related to said predetermined pattern (See for example, item 13, in Fig. 1; and col. 3, lines 63-67).

Applicants submit that Kamimura fails to disclose or suggest each and every element recited in claims 1, 7, 13 and 17 of the present application. In particular, it is submitted that the "unregistered constituent element, such as characters and/or lines" of Kamimura is neither comparable nor analogous to "a first collation section for making comparison and collation between data related to an image in a first area greater than an area of said predetermined pattern in said image and said data related to said predetermined pattern" and to the method step thereof.

For example, the present invention improves identification or recognition accuracy by adding a positioning phase such as the first collation or comparison, in order to solve problems in a pattern identification apparatus for identifying or recognizing a slip or a predetermined pattern by extracting therefrom "characteristic data."

Generally, the error from the coordinates of an image is generally absorbed by a margin. However, if there is noise within the margin, a comparison will be made with noise contained in the margin, so the result of the comparison might become incorrect.

The present invention employs a positioning phase such as first collation or comparison. By this positioning phase, even if noise such as entered characters, seals, or the like is contained in a margin of a "characteristic data" area, a correct comparison can be made by the present invention.

In contrast, Kamimura merely relates to an apparatus that extracts "constituent elements" from a slip, and compares them with already registered "constituent elements", and registers them if not yet registered, in order to recognize the slip having no ID.

Therefore, Applicants submit that Kamimura fails to disclose each and every element recited in claims 1, 7, 13 and 17 of the present application.

Moreover, to qualify as prior art under 35 U.S.C. §102, a single prior art reference must teach, i.e., identically describe, each feature of a rejected claim. As explained above, Kamimura fails to disclose or suggest each and every feature of claims 1, 7, 13 and 17. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 7, 13 and 17 are not anticipated by nor rendered obvious by the disclosure of Kamimura. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 7, 13 and 17 are allowable.

As claims 3-6 depend from claim 1, claims 8-12 depend from claim 7, claims 14-16 depend from 13, and claims 18-20 depends from claim 17, Applicants submit that each of these claims incorporates the patentable aspects therein, and are therefore allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to the independent claims, as well as for the additional subject matter recited therein.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

Conclusion

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that each of claims 1, 3-7 and 9-20 recites subject matter that is neither disclosed nor suggested in the cited prior art. Applicants also submit that the subject matter is more than sufficient to render the claims non-obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art, and therefore respectfully request that claims 1-20 be found allowable and that this application be passed to issue.

If for any reason, the Examiner determines that the application is not now in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact the Applicants' undersigned attorney at the indicated telephone number to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this application.

In the event this paper has not been timely filed, the Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Any fees for such an extension, together with any additional fees that may be due with respect to this paper, may be charged to counsel's Deposit Account No. 01-2300, referencing Attorney Docket No. 024938-00001.

Respectfully submitted,

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